

Media release
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Younger workers think older workers stop contributing in their 50s

Research carried out by National Seniors has found that younger workers have negative attitudes towards their older colleagues.

Close to half of the younger workers surveyed at a Melbourne company believed that workers stopped contributing to the business between 55 and 59 years of age. Younger workers also saw very few good reasons for hiring older workers.

The older workers surveyed at the same company did not share these views. They saw themselves as highly valuable resources that continued contributing into their seventies.

These opposite views extend to ways of encouraging older workers to stay in employment. Older workers wanted a range of measures, including flexible working, age-neutral workplaces, proactive recruitment of older workers, training and technology support. Younger workers only backed the idea of training and technology support.

Commenting on the survey results National Seniors chief executive, Michael O'Neill said this confirms what many older workers have told us that once they reach their mid fifties they are seen as less productive and less important than their younger colleagues.

"These negative attitudes can lead to older workers being forced out of jobs and stop them getting new ones.

"Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that older Australians experience longer periods of underemployment and over 40,000 seniors who want to work have given up looking because employers think they are too old.

"With attitudes like these it is little wonder that Australia has the lowest workforce participation rate for the over-55s of all English-speaking OECD countries.

"Negative attitudes to older Australians go beyond the workplace and into the wider community. Leadership is need from governments, community organisations, employers and trade unions to tackle these attitudes. National Seniors is calling for tougher anti-discrimination legislation and an education campaign to tackle negative misconceptions about older Australians." said O'Neill.

Michael O'Neill is available for comment on 0448 125 898.

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With around 280,000 members, National Seniors is Australia's largest consumer organisation for the over-50s and fourth largest group of its kind in the world.